



News Release

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Northwestern Division
Public Affairs Office

12565 West Center Road
Omaha, Nebraska 68144-3869

Phone: (402) 697-2552
Fax: (402) 697-2554

Contact: Paul Johnston
(402) 697-2552
Larry Cieslik
(402) 697-2675
Date: April 8, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Despite a slight increase in the accumulation of snow in the mountains, dry conditions persist across much of the Missouri River basin. Further reductions in Missouri River flows are likely in July.

“Runoff in March was 1.2 million acre feet (MAF), only 41 percent of normal. The mountain snowpack has improved over the last few weeks, but it is still below normal. As of April 1, it was 87 percent of normal in the reach above Fort Peck and 84 percent in the reach from Fort Peck to Garrison,” said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management Division in Omaha. Normally, the mountain snowpack peaks near mid-April.

“Assuming regular rainfall for the rest of the year, we are forecasting runoff will be 18.5 MAF,” said Cieslik. Normal is 25.2 MAF.

Releases from Gavins Point varied from 12,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 25,000 cfs during March as support for the navigation season began. Because the reservoirs are low, flows are 4,000 cfs below full service. “Given our forecast, we expect a further reduction to minimum service in July,” said Cieslik. The season length should be the normal eight months, ending Dec. 1.

Due to the low river levels and the dry conditions downstream, navigators, marina owners and other river users are experiencing difficulties this spring. Boaters and fishermen should be aware of the current conditions and take necessary precautions.

System storage ended March at 48.5 MAF. Last year at this time it was 51.9 MAF. The amount of water in the reservoirs is more than 9 MAF lower than normal, putting the three largest main stem lakes 8-15 feet below normal.

Gavins Point releases averaged 17,800 cfs in March, compared to an average of 21,200 cfs. Lewis and Clark Lake will remain near 1207.5 feet above mean sea level (msl) during April before dropping to 1206 feet msl by the end of the month.

Fort Randall releases averaged 15,900 cfs in March. They will range from 18,000 to 23,000 cfs in April as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended March at elevation 1350.3 feet msl. It will continue to refill in April, ending the month near 1354 feet msl. It will end May near 1355 feet msl.

Lake Oahe ended the month at 1598.2 feet msl. The lake will drop two feet in April, ending the month 11 feet below normal. The lake is 4 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 12,500 cfs during March, compared to a normal of 20,700 cfs. They were reduced to 10,000 cfs on April 5 and will remain at that rate through the month. Lake Sakakawea ended March at 1826.9 feet msl. It will rise less than one foot in April, ending the month 9 feet below normal. The lake is 3 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 4,600 cfs during March, compared to a normal of 8,800 cfs. They will remain near 4,000 cfs during April. The lake ended the month at elevation 2218.5 feet msl. It will rise only slightly during April, ending the month 15 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was nearly 4 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 504 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in March, 72 percent of normal. Given the forecasted inflow this year, energy production should be 7.2 billion kWh compared to a normal of 10.2 billion kWh.

Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil.

MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On Mar 31	Change in Mar	On Mar 31	% of 1967-2000 Average	Change in Mar
Fort Peck	2218.5	-0.1	12,019	80	-16
Garrison	1826.9	-0.1	15,076	84	-167
Oahe	1598.2	-0.7	16,113	85	-199
Big Bend	1420.8	+0.4	1,736	101	+28
Fort Randall	1350.3	+1.6	3,144	82	+117
Gavins Point	1206.8	+0.6	378	102	+15
			48,466	84	-222

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR MARCH

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	4.6	286	45
Garrison	12.5	768	99
Oahe	16.9	1038	151
Big Bend	15.9	975	59
Fort Randall	15.9	975	99
Gavins Point	17.8	1096	50
			504